

REUBEN J. CHAMPION.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 666.]

JANUARY 10, 1857.

Mr. BROOM, from the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, to whom were referred the papers in the case of Reuben J. Champion, submit the following report :*

The petitioner states in his petition, under oath, that he is the only child of Reuben and Rhoda H. Champion, formerly of East Haddam, Connecticut, and that his father during his life frequently related the history of his revolutionary services, and stated that he was assistant commissary under Israel Champion, both of whom were under Colonel Henry Champion, commissary general, and that his father served from some time about the *middle of the war*, as assistant commissary, until *the close of the same*; that his father applied for a pension, but from poverty and infirmity did not succeed, and that he died in March, 1838; that his father and mother were married in 1782, and that his mother died on the 3d January, 1852.

The claimant, in support of his claim, exhibits receipts and documents beginning in September, 1778, and running through a period of several years; also statements from the records of the comptroller's office of Connecticut, for service shown in the years 1780 and 1781, and copies from the Historical Society of Connecticut, showing him to have been in the service as assistant commissary for three or four years; also the copy of a letter dated August 27, 1798, and marked A, addressed to his father by Colonel Henry Champion, the commissary general, under whom he served, in which he states that "he, Reuben Champion, father of the claimant, served the greater part of the last war in the *commissary line*, and was wounded," &c.

The records from the secretary of state also show him to have been in service during the year 1779, making in all a mass of testimony sufficient to establish beyond the possibility of a doubt that Reuben Champion was several years assistant commissary in the Revolution. The marriage of Reuben Champion to Rhoda Hyde Jewitt is established by the records of the town clerk to have taken place on 12th November, 1782. The objection to allowance of the pension due, rests upon the presumption that Reuben Champion was a mere *civil agent*,

employed by the commissary general to receive beef and provisions for the army. The receipts filed by petitioner show him to have been in the receipt of beef and provision for the army from *purchasing commissaries*; but the idea that the commissary general should *commission* commissaries to *purchase* beef, &c., for the army, and then deliver them over to a *civil* agent to be dispensed to the soldiers, is one that your committee could not for a moment entertain.

If there are no resolves of the Continental Congress to the contrary, this process would be inconsistent with the very nature of things; but there were no remaining doubts on the minds of the committee. The certified copy from the secretary of the State of Connecticut of a petition filed in 1783 would relieve them of all difficulty. There he designates himself by his title, and the character of his service is also shown by the letters of Col. Henry Champion, commissary general, under whom he served.

The fact once admitted that Reuben Champion was an assistant commissary, and the proper length of service established, the pension is provided for by the law of 1832, and claimant's case should have been adjudicated and paid under the provisions of said act; and the marriage having taken place *prior* to the last period of his service, the proper pension should have been meted out to the widow under the provisions of the act of July 4, 1836; or why pass such general acts for this purpose? The Pension Office says it is not satisfied that the petitioner was subject to military control, or, in other words, subject to "martial law." That the evidence proves the fact of his grade as *commissary* cannot be questioned, unless the records themselves are not to be relied upon.

Your committee therefore report a bill for his relief.